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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 EB-08 FRB-01 INR-10
NSAE-00 ICA-20 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02
LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /073 W
----------008960 230621Z /65
R 210940Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 807
INFO USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS TUNIS 2901

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELTN, ELAB, TS
SUBJECT: GOT ANNOUNCES INCREASES IN ROAD AND RAIL PASSENGER/FREIGHT
TRANSPORT COSTS

REF: TUNIS 2847

1. SUMMARY: MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT APRIL 19 ANNOUNCED UNEXPECT-
EDLY BIG INCREASES IN COST OF BOTH ROAD AND RAIL PASSENGER AND FREIGHT

TRANSPORTATION. PASSENGER FARES WILL GO UP BY BETWEEN 9 AND 17
PERCENT AND FREIGHT RATES BY BETWEEN 7 AND 30 PERCENT. TAXES,
LOUAGES (COMMERCIAL INTER-CITY TAXIS), STATE AIRLINE AND STATE
NAVIGATION COMPANY ARE NOT AFFECTED BY INCREASES, WHICH COME INTO
EFFECT
APRIL 25. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ANNOUNCING INCREASES AT PRESS CONFERENCE WOTAOQON
MINISTER OF TRANSPORT ABDELHAMID SASSI ATTRIBUTED NECESSITY FOR
INCREASES PARTLY TO RISING SALARIES OF EMPLOYEES IN TRANSPORT SECTOR
(COMPRISING MAINLY OF SOCIETE NATIONAL DE TRANSPORT - SNT - ROAD
AND SOCIETE NATIONALE DES CHEMINS DE FER TRUNISIEN - SNCFT - RAIL).
HE CLAIMED SALARIES ACCOUNTED FOR UP TO 83 PERCENT OF
EXPENDITURES OF TRANSPORT COMPANIES IN TUNISIA, COMPARED WITH
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NO MORE THA 60 PERCENT IN EUROPE. IN ADDITION, SASSI SAID
NE
TTOOPUP-DATE COMPANIES' EQUIPMENT AND MASSIVE EXPENSE
THIS INVOLVED HAD RESULTED IN DEFICITS OF 4.9 MILLION TD
($11.8 MILLION) AT SNCFT AND 1.2 MILLION TD ($2.9 MILLION)
AT SNT.

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3. DETAILED INCREASES ARE AS FOLLOWS: PASSENGERS: ROAD TRANSPORT, UP BETWEEN 9 AND 17 PERCENT (THE LONGER THE JOURNEY, THE HIGHER THE INCREASE), RAIL TRANPORT, UP BY SAME FIGURE, BUT HERE THE LONGER THE JOURNEY, THE SMALLER THE INCREASE. FREIGHT: BOTH ROAD AND RAIL TRANSPORT GOES UP BY BETWEEN 7 AND 30 PERCENT, BUGGEST INCREASES AFFECTING THE SHORTEST TRIPS. THESE INCREASES WILL NOT TOUCH ONE VITAL SECTOR OFLTUNISIAN ECONOMY - CEREALS - AND WILL BE LIMITED TO 80 PER CENT FOR TRANPORT OF TUNISIAN PHOSPHATES, IN ORDER TO KEEP THEIR PRICE COMPETITIVE ON INTERNATIONAL MARKET.

4. OTHER MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY MINISTER SASSI INCLUDE A SECOND 25 PERCENT INCREASE IN SPECIAL STUDENT FARES WITHIN TUNIS AREA, BRINGING THESE MORE INTO LINE WITH COSTS OF SIMILAR TRANSPORT OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL. (MINISTER SASSI SAID STUDENTS IN TUNIS CURRENTLY PAID ONLY HALF AS MUCH AS STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL).

5. HE ALSO REFERRED TO URBAN METRO SYSTEM PLANNED FOR TUNIS SAYING WORK WILL START AT BEGINNING OF NEXT YEAR. COST OF THIS PROJECT IS NOW ESTIMATED AT 50 MILLION TD ($120 MILLION).

6. COMMENT: BUS AND RAIL FARE INCREASES APPEAR TO EXPLAIN EXTRA ONE-HALF PERCENT INCREASE QUOTE TO COMPENSATE FOR HIGHER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COSTS UNQUOTE INCLUDED IN RECENT SETTLEMENT RAISING TUNISIAN MINIMUM WAGES BY 11 PERCENT (SEE REFTEL).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COSTS, DATA, BURDENSHARING, PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION, RAIL TRANSPORTATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TUNIS02901
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780173-0334
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780429/aaaaayaw.tel
Line Count: 94
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 061f54a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TUNIS 2847
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2883483
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOT ANNOUNCES INCREASES IN ROAD AND RAIL PASSENGER/FREIGHT TRANSPORT COSTS
TAGS: ELTN, ELAB, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/061f54a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014